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DOWNSTATE TRANSPORTATION

THE FINAL STRETCH



Staff photo/Linda Laird

Donald Poore, a construction technician for the Delaware Department of Transportation, goes over plans for the new bridge over Sandom Branch, part of the final phase of construction on Del. 1, with inspector Bob See. Mr. Poore is helping to build a new bridge to replace the old one his grandfather helped build. For the story, see Page 3.

End in sight for massive Del 1. highway project

By Ken Grant
Staff writer

DOVER — Within two years the largest single public works project in the history of Delaware is scheduled to be complete.

Del. 1, running 46 miles from Dover Air Force Base to Tybouts Corner, is expected to make travel up and down the state faster and easier than ever before.

The project, which started in 1989, has been broken down into four sections.

The first section, from Dover to Smyrna, opened in December 1993.

The section between St. Georges and Tybouts Corner — including the new bridge over the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal — started welcoming travelers in 1995.

The third section, running from the canal to Odessa, was

Crews are now busy working on the final section — a 7.7-mile stretch of roadway connecting Smyrna and Odessa.

That final section should be ready for traffic in May 2003.

The entire Del. 1 project is estimated to cost about \$1 billion.

Once open, motorists will be able to travel from the south side of Dover to I-95 without having to stop for a single traffic light or stop sign.

In fact, motorists with E-Z Pass can cruise right on through the Biddles Corner toll plaza without slowing down.

Transportation officials expect the short-distance traveler using U.S. 13 to benefit as well with lower volumes of traffic on that roadway.

Many expect the traditional Downstate traffic back-ups on holiday and NASCAR weekends to be a thing of the past with

travelers having a choice between the two major arteries.

Teresa Lewandowski of the state Department of Transportation is the project manager for Del. 1 construction.

She said building the largest public works project in the state's history is a group effort.

"This not only touches our whole department, but also includes support from outside agencies like DNREC and the Department of Agriculture, not to mention all of the private firms that have contributed as independent contractors," she said.

"Just about everybody in the state has touched this project."

Ms. Lewandowski said by completing the billion-dollar project in sections, the state was able to spread the cost over more than a decade — a needed measure considering the state's annual budget is a little more than \$2 billion.

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